

REMARKS

In the Office Action, a restriction requirement under 35 U.S.C. 121 was issued, which required an election between two groups of claims, in particular between the claims in Group I encompassing method claims 1-28 and the claims in Group II encompassing apparatus claims 29-30. In response, applicant hereby elects, with traverse, the Group I claims for prosecution and has withdrawn the Group II claims.

A review of the currently pending claims, however, has revealed that the subject matter of Group II is related to the subject matter of Group I. For example, claim 1 recites a step of molecularly bonding to each other first and second front faces of first and second substrates, respectively, to provide a composite structure, the first and second faces being substantially parallel and corresponding in surface shape, the first front face having a first outline, the second front face having a second outline, and a peripheral side of the second substrate substantially bordering the second front face and being oriented generally perpendicularly with respect thereto, wherein the second outline has dimensions larger than the first outline, such that during bonding at least a portion of the first outline is disposed within the second outline for improving bonding in a region at the periphery of the first front face. Claim 3 recites that this bonding minimizes the size of a peripheral region about the first front face within an overlapping area at which the front faces overlap, in which peripheral region the bonding between the faces is weak or absent. Claim 29 recites the structure that results from such bonding along with the additional feature that the peripheral region has a maximum width of less than 0.5 mm, and this is also recited in method claim 4. Therefore, searching with respect to the claims of Groups I and II for this feature would not result in an undue burden on the Examiner and would of necessity be required in order to properly evaluate patentability for these claims. In view of this, the restriction requirement should be withdrawn and all claims examined at this time.

Furthermore, applicant believes that application is now in condition for allowance. The issuance of a notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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